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Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

List of issues in relation to the combined second and third periodic reports of Kyrgyzstan

Addendum

Replies of Kyrgyzstan to the list of issues*

[Date received: 24 March 2015]

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 1 of the list of issues (E/C.12/KGZ/Q/2-3)

1. The importance of social and economic rights for ensuring the basic legal status of the individual is recognized in Kyrgyzstan as an indisputable fact, and all human rights and freedoms are deemed to be equally important and interrelated.

2. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights covers a broad spectrum of rights, including the right to work, the right to decent working conditions, the right to organize trade unions, the right to social security and welfare, protection of the family and children, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to health care, the right to education and the right to participate in cultural life.

3. In accordance with the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, the generally recognized principles and norms of international law form an integral part of the legal system; court cases are decided on the basis of the country's Constitution, legislation and regulations, and international instruments to which Kyrgyzstan is a party and which have entered into force in conformity with the law. The norms set forth in the international human rights instruments are directly enforceable and have precedence over those of other international treaties.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Reply to questions raised in paragraph 2 of the list of issues

4. The budget of the Office of the Ombudsman from 2009 to 2012 remained at a level of 26 million soms. Pursuant to Government Decision No. 473 of 22 August 2011, the Office has a maximum staff of 79. The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a number of decisions concerning the status and improving the effectiveness of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. In particular, resolution 48/134 adopted the Paris Principles – minimum standards for the status and principles governing the activity of the Office of the Ombudsman and other national human rights institutions. General Assembly resolution 64/161 encourages national institutions, including Ombudsman institutions, to seek accreditation status through the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. In March 2012, the Ombudsman of Kyrgyzstan was accredited by the International Coordinating Committee with the status of B, which signifies incomplete compliance with the Paris Principles. At the same time, recommendations were made for improving Kyrgyzstan's legislation governing the Ombudsman's activities.

5. Information on Kyrgyzstan concerning the obligations under articles 1 to 5 of the Covenant are contained in Annex 2 to Government Decision No. 141 of 20 February 2012 on country reports relating to the implementation of United Nations human rights conventions.

I. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (articles 1–5)

Article 2, paragraph 1
Maximum available resources

Reply to questions raised in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the list of issues

6. The legal foundation has been established for regulating questions associated with the fight against corruption. A central role in that regard is played by the new version of the Anti-Corruption Act. The Ministry of the Economy is responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the national and departmental action plans for combating corruption. In 2014, the investigative units of the State Committee on National Security and other law enforcement bodies instituted 327 criminal proceedings. A total of 473,265, 344 soms in compensation was paid in the course of operations and investigations.

7. The presidential decrees on a State strategy for an anti-corruption policy and measures to combat corruption and on a national strategy for sustainable development 2013-2017 define the fight against corruption as the most important long-term goal of the State and civil society. The elimination of corruption schemes, the modernization of State bodies with a view to increasing their transparency and accountability, and the interaction between these bodies and civil society are the main priorities.

8. In 2012 a Government decision ratified the plan of action to counter corruption 2012–2014 in order to implement the State anti-corruption strategy. To give effect to Presidential Decree No. 215 of 12 November 2013 on measures to eliminate the causes of political and systemic corruption in government, all law-enforcement bodies were instructed to monitor government bodies to investigate corruption schemes and to take measures to dismantle them. They conduct the necessary investigative and other measures to prevent and eliminate corruption and dismantle corruption schemes in those bodies.

9. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs monitored 22 government bodies and uncovered 395 cases of corruption– 61 in the Ministry of Education and Science, 32 in the Ministry of Health, 18 in the Ministry of Transport and Communications, 156 in local government bodies, 26 in the State Penal Correction Service, 27 in the State Architecture, Construction, and Housing and Public Services Agency, 13 in the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Safety Inspectorate, 9 at the Kyrgyzpochtasi State enterprise, and at the State Environmental and Technical Safety Inspectorate. Moreover, government authorities have elaborated inter-agency plans for combating and eliminating corruption with a view to implementing Defence Council Decision No. 6 of 4 November 2013 on the implementation of the State anti-corruption strategy and measures to eliminate the causes of political and systemic corruption in government and Presidential Decree No. 215 of 12 November 2013 on measures to eliminate the causes of political and systemic corruption in government. In 2014 officials of the internal affairs agencies brought to light 618 cases of official misconduct and other offences involving corruption. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a hotline for citizens to report corruption in State bodies and institutions.

10. Officials of the State service for combating economic crime brought to light 292 cases of corruption, and in 174 cases, the prosecuting authorities instituted criminal proceedings; the losses involved amounted to 242,242,000 soms. An investigation was conducted on 98 criminal cases, which were then referred to the courts. A total of 47,558,400 soms in compensation was paid (including 25,898,600 soms by the regional offices of the treasury), and 167 criminal cases were instituted for abuse of authority.

Article 2, paragraph 2
Non-discrimination

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 5 of the list of issues

11. Pursuant to article 16, paragraph 3, of the Constitution and article 16, paragraph 1, of the Code of Criminal Procedure, justice shall be administered on the principle of the equality of citizens before the law and the courts, irrespective of social origin, race or ethnicity, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, opinions or other circumstances. Laws and regulations have been adopted in compliance with these principles.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 6 of the list of issues

12. Amendments have been made to the State Benefits Act in order to ensure the confidential allocation of a monthly allowance to children who are infected with HIV or have AIDS. The Act recommends that there should be no separate categories of children with special needs, children with cerebral palsy and children who are infected with HIV or have AIDS, but that all should be grouped together in the sole category of children with special needs. With a view to combating the HIV epidemic in Kyrgyzstan and improving the effectiveness of measures to fight HIV/AIDS, Government Decision No. 867 of 29 December 2012 approved the State programme for the stabilization of the HIV epidemic in Kyrgyzstan 2012-2016 and the action plan to give effect to that programme.

13. Pursuant to an order of the Ministry of Health, heads of district/urban social development administrations must appoint specialists and social workers to work with persons with HIV and members of their family. Act No. 149 of 13 August 2005 on HIV/AIDS in Kyrgyzstan defines the rights of persons living with or suffering from HIV/AIDS, State guarantees, and the rights and obligations of persons in the area of HIV/AIDS, and it prohibits the restriction of the rights and stigmatization of persons living with HIV/AIDS. Article 145 of the Criminal Code makes it an offence to violate medical

confidentiality. The action plan addresses non-traditional forms of sexual relations in order to instil safe behaviour in vulnerable groups.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 7 of the list of issues

14. The State procurement programme for 2014, approved by government order, made provision for training courses on the management of inter-ethnic relations and intercultural communications; 528 State-level and 1,036 municipal civil servants took part in such courses.

15. The draft State procurement programme for 2015 calls for training courses for 250 heads of organizational subdivisions of State bodies and 450 specialists in local government bodies.

16. In accordance with the Policy Framework for promoting national unity and inter-ethnic relations, and with a view to promoting multicultural diversity and heightening awareness of the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan, in 2014 a training course was conducted on the subject of ethnocultural diversity in Kyrgyzstan for the officials of State institutions. In November 2014, the authorities held ethnic community days throughout the country to familiarize the population with the culture and traditions of ethnic minorities. Pursuant to a government decision, a department, consisting of seven persons, was established within the State agency for local government and inter-ethnic relations in order to work with the civil society organizations that make up the Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan. Three of these persons work in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, which are inhabited mainly by ethnic minorities. Under the Plan for priority action for the implementation of the Policy Framework, in March 2014 a competition was announced for the award of small grants; 6,980,167 soms were granted for 15 projects. Most of this funding was allocated to finance projects to promote awareness of, preserve and promote the culture of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan. The programme for the development of local government in Kyrgyzstan 2013–2017 approved by Government Decision No. 678 of 18 December 2013 provides for a number of measures to promote regional development through a strengthening of the potential of local-government bodies.

Article 3
Equal rights of men and women

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 8 of the list of issues

17. Government Decision No. 443 of 27 June 2012 approved the National Strategy for achieving gender equality by 2020 and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2012–2014. This document was elaborated by an inter-agency working group approved by Government Order No. 267 of 6 July 2011 with the support of international organizations and experts in gender issues.

18. In keeping with the goals of the National Strategy (establishment of an institutional basis for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for the country's citizens, irrespective of sex, age, social status, special needs, gender identity and other grounds for discrimination, in order to achieve full realization of the potential of the population), four priority areas have been defined:

- Promoting the economic empowerment of women;
- Creating a system of functional education;
- Eliminating gender discrimination and increasing women's access to justice;

- Promoting gender parity in decision-making and strengthening women's participation in political life.

19. For the first time in 2012, funding was budgeted to carry out the National Action Plan for gender equality (2012–2014), data were gathered on the needs and possibilities for the financing of the five priorities of the National Strategy for gender equality, and the funding shortfall was evaluated for a sustainable implementation of the measures under these priorities. In 2013, also for the first time, the implementation of the National Action Plan for gender equality 2012–2014, adopted under Government Decision No. 443 of 27 June 2012, was monitored.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 9 of the list of issues

20. The introduction into electoral legislation in 2007 of a mandatory quota for underrepresented population groups for the lists of parties that form the country's parliament was a major achievement. The quota principle specifies that no more than 70 per cent of candidates nominated are of the same sex and that there are no more than three positions between men and women on the lists. The new version of the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women, adopted in 2008, was an important landmark for the further expansion of women's participation in government at the decision-making level. Specific mechanisms were defined for ensuring gender equality in the decision-making process of the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Equal rights and opportunities in the civil service are ensured on the basis of a competitive selection process; competitions for one sex only are prohibited. Thanks to the implementation of the Act, in 2014 the representation of women attained 60 per cent in the Supreme Court, 50 per cent in the Office of the Ombudsman, and 33.3 per cent in the Central Elections and Referendums Commission and in the Chamber of Accounts. In 2012, women made up 16 per cent of the deputies to Kyrgyzstan's local councils, or 1,326, as compared to 6,753 men. By way of comparison, in 2006 they accounted for 19.1 per cent of all deputies, as against 80.9 per cent for men. In the framework of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, an intersectoral working group comprising representatives of State bodies and voluntary organizations is working to improve the electoral system and ensure transparency in the 2015 parliamentary elections. \ designated body will be introducing proposals, for discussion in the working group, on ways of strengthening the quota system for the political advancement of women. Another very topical issue is the question of enhancing parliamentary control and prosecutorial monitoring of compliance with the Constitution and legislation on gender equality and elections to ensure the representation of women at the deci ion-making level in elected and appointed positions in government.

21. According to data made available by government authorities, as of 1 January 2014 women accounted for 43.5 per cent of civil servants, or 6,307 out of 14,514 persons.

22. Representation at the various levels of the State civil service is as follows:

- Executive posts – 6 out of 36 persons (16.6 per cent) are women;
- Higher intermediate posts – 667 out of 2,219 persons (30 per cent) are women;
- Senior posts – 2,646 out of 5,708 persons (46.3 per cent) are women;
- Junior posts – 2,988 out of 6,551 persons (45.6 per cent) are women.

23. The provisional regulations on the holding of competitions to fill vacancies in administrative posts in the State civil service introduced a rule pursuant to which in the event of an equal number of votes for candidates of different sexes or ethnic groups, the competition and certification commission must recommend the candidate whose sex or ethnic group is less represented in the relevant category of civil servants in the State body.

The members of the competition and certification commission, who are officials of the State Personnel Department, must strictly comply with this rule.

II. Issues relating to specific provisions of the Covenant (articles 6–15)

Article 6
The right to work

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 10 of the list of issues

24. Active measures are being taken on the labour market to provide assistance in finding employment. With the increase in unemployment and the job shortage, priority is given to training unemployed persons. Over the past year, 8,100 persons have received training. Training of unemployed persons is conducted primarily in occupations that are in demand on the labour market: gas and arc welders, drivers, hairdressers, computer operators, accountants, cooks, seamstresses, administrative assistants, electricians and tractor operators. The effectiveness of occupational training is seen in the subsequent employment figures: more than 74 per cent find jobs following training. According to figures for 2014, the training programme for unemployed persons was conducted in commercial educational institutions (30 per cent of the total) and in vocational schools (70 per cent). Training lasted three months on average. Unemployed persons receive microcredits in order to create new jobs in the labour market through the establishment of small and medium-size businesses.

25. In January 2015, 25,000 persons were employed on a temporary basis to perform community service. Paid community service has been used on the labour market for many years to provide temporary employment and ensure minimum income for unemployed persons while they seek work. It is designed for unemployed persons who are registered with their local employment agency. All employers, irrespective of the form of ownership, may offer such employment, the aim of which is to improve the social infrastructure of the regions. In the past year, 34,000 persons unemployed persons benefitted from active labour market measures (paid community service, occupational training, microcredits), or more than 50 per cent of those registered with their local employment agency. The local employment agencies also provide assistance to persons with special needs. Several pieces of legislation have been elaborated to improve the quality of life of persons with special needs and to eliminate obstacles to their social inclusion.

26. Pursuant to the Act of 30 June 1998 on employment assistance, group III persons with special needs are entitled to the services of the employment agencies, since persons in that group are classified as able-bodied members of the population.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 11 of the list of issues

27. The Ministry of the Economy has set up working groups to elaborate proposals for the draft government programme for 2015–2017 to curb the shadow economy. The working groups, which are made up of officials of State bodies and members of business associations, focus on the following areas:

- Elaborating an information policy and conducting an awareness-raising campaign;
- Improving fiscal policy;
- Devising regulatory mechanisms;

- Improving oversight functions;
- Elaborating effective measures in the financial sector;
- Improving accounting for raw materials, goods, tourism operations, construction work, rental property and real estate services.

28. To improve access to State benefits, Ministry of the Economy, the State Registration Service and the Social Fund have signed a cooperation agreement to provide assistance to persons seeking to obtain official documents (attestations of pension entitlement, birth certificates, death certificates, passports) and State benefits. An agreement has also been signed with the State Tax Service on questions relating to the identification of persons applying for monthly benefits for low-income families with children who have given false information about employment, have evaded taxes or have failed to register with the tax authorities.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 12 of the list of issues

29. By law, persons with refugee status are treated equally with Kyrgyz citizens in respect of employment. They do not require a work permit.

30. Asylum-seekers have the right to work and may be employed as foreign nationals in conformity with legislation on foreign labour migration.

Article 7
The right to just and favourable conditions of work

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 13 of the list of issues

31. Act No. 176 of 30 December 2014 on the 2015 National Budget and the 2016–2017 Budget Estimate sets the minimum wage at 970 soms for 2015, 1,060 soms for 2016 and 1,160 soms for 2017.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 14 of the list of issues

32. Labour legislation has introduced State guarantees for labour rights and freedoms and the protection of the rights and interests of employees and employers. Such legislation is designed to regulate relations arising from the working process, including assistance to employees in reconciling their employment and family obligations. The principle of gender equality means that both mothers and fathers are eligible for the benefits and guarantees available to employees with family obligations.

33. Kyrgyzstan's Labour Code has strengthened the explicit prohibition of gender discrimination at the workplace. Wage levels depend, irrespective of sex, on the quantity, quality and complexity of the work in question.

34. Pursuant to the Labour Code, employees, irrespective of sex, are entitled to a safe and hazard-free working environment and to information on workplace conditions and occupational safety.

35. The gender balance is taken into consideration for recruitment, for internships and for basic and advanced training courses, the aim being to achieve equality of opportunity for women and men.

36. Male and female employees are both entitled to parental leave, provided they have submitted the requisite documents.

37. In accordance with articles 8 and 44 of the Civil Service Act, men and women are paid equal wages in keeping with the position held. A unified system of remuneration for civil servants covers salaries and bonuses.

38. Equal working conditions for men and women are also ensured, in line with occupational safety and health requirements, as is a timely issuance of technical and other work-related documentation.

39. The State Personnel Service closely monitors the implementation of constitutional provisions on equal access to the State and municipal civil service. There are no competitions opened solely to members of one sex. There have not been any reports or complaints of gender discrimination submitted by citizens or State or municipal civil servants.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 15 of the list of issues

40. In 2011 a Government Decision on laws and regulations in the area of public health was adopted with a view to preventing the occurrence and spread of infectious occupational illnesses among persons employed in the production, storage, transport and marketing of food products and drinking water, the education of children, and municipal and consumer services, as well as persons working in hazardous occupational conditions, the aim being to provide timely and quality health care for employees and to regulate procedures for initial and periodic medical examinations.

41. In 2014, 38 cases of work-related injury were identified in the course of an initial examination – 21 cases in rural areas and 17 in urban areas. That was an increase in the number of cases by 16 (42.1 per cent) over 2013, when there were 22 such cases. Industrial injury is usually the result of an accident. Recently, with increased construction, the failure to observe safety requirements has resulted in accidents at building sites.

42. Initial examinations in connection with occupational illness revealed a decline in the number of cases by five compared to 2013 (11).

43. In 2014, second examinations of persons with special needs showed a decrease in the number of cases of industrial injury by 14, or 11.4 per cent compared to 2013 (136 cases). Data on second examinations of such persons for occupational illness showed a decline by 1, or 3.4 per cent, compared to the figure for 2013 (30 cases).

44. Regular inspections are conducted to address the high rate of work-related accidents and illnesses. Every two months training courses are held for employers and their representatives at an advanced training establishment of a standardization and metrology centre on the subject of occupational safety and accident prevention. Consultation and awareness-raising initiatives are carried out with the public at large.

45. Various tripartite conferences and seminars are held with the participation of State authorities to discuss occupational safety and social protection. Phase II of the project "From the Crisis towards Decent and Safe Jobs" (2014–2018) has been launched with the support of the International Labour Organization.

46. Senior officials are subject to administrative liability for violations of labour legislation concerning occupational safety and accident prevention.

47. Pursuant to Ministry of Health Order No. 225, mandatory preventive check-ups and periodic medical examinations are required at all enterprises for persons working under hazardous occupational conditions. In the first six months of 2014, the occupational health department of the State epidemiological monitoring centre of Bishkek conducted 127 health inspections for occupational hazards at the workplace in order to select target groups for

periodic medical examinations. Fines were imposed on 17 enterprises for violations of the relevant regulations.

Article 8
Trade union rights

Article 9
The right to social security

Reply to questions raised in paragraphs 16 and 17 of the list of issues

48. Social policy in conditions of budget restraints is directed at meeting the State's guaranteed social obligations in full, and the State budget continues to have a social focus. Over the past five years (from 2010 to 2014), the budget for the payment of monthly social benefits rose from 1,135.1 million to 2,250.2 million soms, or 98 per cent.

49. The Social Protection Development Strategy 2012–2014 was adopted with a view to building an effective and just social protection system. One of its main focal points is the protection of children and families in difficulty. The Strategy stresses that State policy must aim to promote a healthy and educated young generation, bearing in mind that the goal is to ensure the country's future and to prepare society's future economic assets.

50. The social protection system includes social security payments and benefits, guarantees and monetary compensation for specific population groups and services for vulnerable population categories, including children. Legislation provides for two types of State benefits: a monthly allowance for low-income families with children, and a monthly social allowance. The allowance for low-income families is directed at children, the aim being to offset the gap between the income of the poorest families with children and the guaranteed minimum income.

51. The Government conducts an annual review of the guaranteed minimum income to determine the monthly allowance to be paid to these families. The guaranteed minimum income currently stands at 705 soms, or 52 per cent of the extreme poverty threshold. In the current year, it is planned to increase the guaranteed minimum income from 705 soms to 810 soms, or 15 per cent.

52. In addition to the increase in the guaranteed minimum income, work is proceeding on an ongoing basis to improve targeting so that financial means can be assigned to those families that are genuinely in need. The President of Kyrgyzstan has signed legislation on amendments to the State Benefits Act to restrict eligibility to families with children under the age of 18. Moreover, the determination of a family's total income for the purpose of the allocation of this allowance excludes invalidity pensions which are less than the basic pension component (1,500 soms). The legislation entered into force in May 2014.

53. Currently 310,700 children (105,500 families) receive this allowance, 553.7 soms on average, compared to 88.4 soms in 2004. Since 2010, the monthly social allowance has been allocated on the basis of category. Irrespective of the family's total per capita income, it is paid to persons unable to work (persons with special needs, children with no provider, orphaned children, senior citizens) who are not entitled to pension benefits. Currently 77,600 persons are beneficiaries of this allowance, the average allowance being 2,403.3 soms, compared to 365.4 soms in 2004.

54. In all, 6.6 per cent of the population receive State benefits, as compared to 10.3 per cent in 2004. It is important to note that the amount of State benefits is set on the basis of

budgetary possibilities and the state of the economy and also takes into account the minimum subsistence level.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 18 of the list of issues

55. Pursuant to the State Benefits Act, persons with special needs who are not entitled to a pension are allotted a monthly social allowance. The 60,400 persons in this category include:

- 27,400 children with special needs under 18 years of age (allowance: 3,000 soms);
- 27,000 persons with special needs since childhood (allowance: between 2,000 and 3,000 soms);
- 5,900 persons with special needs due to a common illness (allowance: between 1,000 and 2,000 soms).

56. The basis for an allocation is a document from a medical assessment board certifying invalidity.

57. Monthly allowances are paid until the end of validity of the certificate.

58. The following social welfare decisions have been adopted to define service requirements for persons with special needs:

- Government Decision No. 273 on the approval of minimum social standards of services provided to persons in residential facilities of the relevant authority in the social development sphere;
- Government Decision No. 381 on minimum State standards of services provided to persons with special needs, including children, in semi-residential social welfare organizations and facilities.

59. The adoption of minimum standards contributes to the functioning of the system for evaluating the quality and safety of services provided to persons with special needs.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 19 of the list of issues

60. The Social Protection Development Strategy 2012–2014 was adopted with a view to building an effective and just social protection system. One of its main focal points is the protection of children and families in difficulty. In the context of the implementation of the Strategy, the guaranteed minimum income, which includes a monthly allowance for low-income families with children, was raised from 370 to 705 soms (by 335 soms, or 90.5 per cent). This year it is planned to increase this allowance to 810 soms, or 15 per cent. The budget for the monthly allowance to low-come families has been raised by 1,543.5 million soms, from 504.2 million soms in 2004 to 2,047.7 million soms in 2014.

61. In addition to the increase in the guaranteed minimum income, work is proceeding on an ongoing basis to improve the targeting of such families so that financial means can be assigned to those genuinely in need. The President of Kyrgyzstan has signed legislation on the introduction of amendments to the State Benefits Act to restrict eligibility to families with children under the age of 18. In addition, the determination of a family's total income for the purpose of the allocation of such benefits excludes invalidity pensions which are less than the basic pension component. The legislation entered into force in May 2014.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 20 of the list of issues

62. In 2010 rules were introduced into the State Benefits Act governing the allocation and payment of State benefits in order to provide support to ethnic Kyrgyz returning to their historical homeland.

63. The Act provides for the allocation of State benefits to ethnic Kyrgyz in accordance with the standard procedure, subject to the presentation of a "*kairylman*" (ethnic Kyrgyz returnee) certificate. Persons who have received *kairylman* status are issued a regulation identity card by the migration authorities. The *kairylman* certificate is an identity document and also serves as a basis for the registration of the person concerned and members of his or her family with the internal affairs agencies and for entitlement to benefits, in conformity with the law.

64. Kyrgyzstan's legislation does not provide for the payment of benefits to persons with refugee status or to asylum-seekers.

Article 10
Protection of the family, mothers and children

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 21 of the list of issues

65. Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits the exploitation of children, and the Children's Code prohibits the use or recruitment of children to perform any work that may endanger their health, interfere with their education or cause harm to their health or physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral or social development.

66. The Labour Code prohibits the use of the labour of persons under 18 years of age in harmful or dangerous conditions or underground, as well as in forms of employment that could be harmful to their health or moral development (the gambling industry, work in nightclubs and cabarets, the production, transport of or trade in alcoholic beverages, tobacco goods, drugs and toxic preparations). It is prohibited for workers under 18 years old to carry or move loads exceeding the limits laid down for them. In accordance with article 95 of the Labour Code, the length of the working day (shift) may not exceed the following norms: five hours for workers aged 14–16; seven hours for workers aged 16–18; and two and a half hours for pupils aged 14–16 in general education schools and primary and secondary vocational training institutes who are combining work and study during the school year, and three and a half hours for those aged 16–18.

67. Pursuant to article 297 of the Labour Code, employees under 18 years of age may not be sent on work-related trips or required to perform night work or to work overtime or on weekends or public holidays (with the exception of creative workers employed in the media, cinema, theatre, theatrical and concert organizations or circuses in connection with participation in or production of performances, or professional athletes).

68. Kyrgyzstan has ratified two ILO child labour conventions:

- ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (ratified by Act No. 244 of 31 March 1992);
- ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ratified by Act No. 244 of 10 May 2004).

69. Notwithstanding the country's social legislation, unfortunately child labour is widely used in agriculture, in loading and unloading work, in commerce and at service stations. According to data from the municipal social development authorities, 80 children are involved in the worst forms of child labour.

70. In conjunction with the National Statistics Committee, the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour is conducting a survey on child labour in Kyrgyzstan. Data have been collected and processed, and the Committee is analysing the results.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 22 of the list of issues

71. In conformity with article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and as a signatory of that instrument, on 25 February 2014 Kyrgyzstan presented its fourth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

72. The Constitution guarantees equality of human and civil rights and freedoms, irrespective of sex, race, language, ethnicity, religion, age, political or other beliefs, education, origin, wealth or other status, or other circumstances. Article 16, paragraph 4, of the Constitution stipulates that men and women have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities to exercise them. The Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women gives effect to this constitutional norm. In accordance with this Act, a procedure has been established whereby citizens may report specific cases of violations of gender equality.

73. In recognition of the need to create conditions conducive to overcoming discrimination on grounds of sex and to promoting equality of opportunity for women in all walks of life, domestic legal norms, standards and departmental guidelines regarding gender equality have been strengthened. Persons subjected to sex discrimination have the right to apply to the Ombudsman (Akyikatchy), the procuratorial authorities, the courts, other central government bodies and local government bodies.

74. Since 2012, the Office of the Procurator-General has included a section in government statistical reporting on oversight of enforcement of the law in the area of gender policy.

75. Pursuant to the Code of Administrative Liability, domestic violence is any intentional act (physical, psychological or sexual) committed by one member of the family against another member of the family if it violates the latter's constitutional and other rights and freedoms, causes slight physical harm to health or physical or psychological suffering, harms that person's physical or psychological development, regardless of his or her age or sex, and does not constitute a criminal offence. Criminal liability is entailed if there are aggravating circumstances. It is applicable if one member of the family commits, against another member of the family, the offence of murder, incitement or inducement to suicide, serious or moderately serious bodily harm, trafficking in persons, a sex crime or other offences set out in the Criminal Code, which also provides that an offence committed against a minor, an elderly person, a person in a helpless state, a woman known by the perpetrator to be pregnant, or with the use of a minor or a person known by the perpetrator to be suffering from a mental illness or mental deficiency constitutes an aggravating circumstance.

76. Pursuant to the Code of Criminal Procedure, victims (including women and children) have access in equal measure to immediate protection and effective compensation.

77. The Criminal Code has a separate article on the abduction of women for the purpose of forced marriage. Until recently, the maximum sentence for this offence was deprivation of liberty for 3 years. In 2013, the maximum sentence was raised to 7 years, and to 10 years if the victim is a minor. The Act on Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence and other legislation require the office of the procurator to monitor the legality of the actions of State bodies, to take measures to annul illegal procedural and other decisions and to verify in a complete and timely fashion that reports of domestic violence are registered. The office of the procurator must take all measures required by law in response to bride abduction and must give special attention to the legality and validity of procedural decisions taken by the investigative and judicial authorities.

78. In accordance with the Act on Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs carries out organizational, legal and preventive initiatives to combat that phenomenon.

79. To improve the legal framework, new instructions have been elaborated for organizing the work of the internal affairs agencies in preventing and combating domestic violence, and a new form of temporary restraining order has been introduced. Instructions have been drawn up and approved for departmental statistical reporting on temporary restraining orders issued for perpetrators of domestic violence and for their victims. The forms of departmental reports have been approved, which include gender-disaggregated data on perpetrators of domestic violence, victims, age, employment, education etc., as well as on temporary protection orders issued.

80. In 2012 a bill was approved which would amend article 66-3 of the Code of Administrative Liability so as to provide for the administrative detention of perpetrators of domestic violence for up to 5 days. The legislation, adopted in 2013, sets out harsher penalties for sex offences committed against minors.

81. Work is also underway to improve legislation on the prevention of domestic violence.

82. Local internal affairs agencies regularly conduct prevention activities to address domestic violence. In 2014, 3,126 cases of domestic violence were registered, including 2,408 cases of physical violence, 712 cases of psychological violence and 6 cases of sexual violence. In the same period, the internal affairs agencies issued 2,619 temporary restraining orders, including 2,571 against men, or 98.2 per cent of the total; 48 temporary restraining orders (1.8 per cent) were issued against women. In 2014, the internal affairs agencies conducted 243 reviews, on the basis of which 25 actions were challenged as being unlawful, 166 orders and 81 directives were issued to rectify violations, 24 persons received a warning, and disciplinary and administrative proceedings were instituted against 12 persons. According to procuratorial reports, disciplinary and administrative action was taken against 243 persons, and criminal proceedings were instituted in 21 cases; 31 applications were filed with the courts for the protection of the rights and interests of minors.

83. To uncover cases of violence against minors and prosecute persons accused of domestic violence and cruelty against children, protect the rights and interests of children and prevent juvenile delinquency, officials of the juvenile affairs inspectorate in conjunction with officials of the department of education and the social development administration regularly conduct spot checks in visits to families in which children have been placed in foster care and to families in difficulty.

84. Communal prevention centres make a major contribution to efforts to prevent domestic violence. Currently there are 550 such centres in operation around the country, bringing together some 11,000 representatives of civil society, including 575 women's councils representing 2,841 persons; 576 youth councils representing 2,740 persons are also in operation. Representatives of communal prevention centres, and in particular of women's and children's councils, work with habitual domestic abusers, alcoholics and drug addicts in cooperation with the local police and juvenile affairs inspectorates.

Article 11
The right to an adequate standard of living

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 23 of the list of issues

Statistical data on poverty and income

Percentage of the population living below the poverty line	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
National	31.7	33.7	36.8	38.0	37.0
Urban	21.9	23.6	30.7	35.4	28.5
Rural	37.1	39.5	40.4	39.6	41.4
Children aged 0–15	40.3	43.8	46.9	46.4	46.5
Persons of working age	28.6	29.7	33.0	35.0	33.3
Men aged 16–62	30.3	30.4	33.0	35.9	33.6
Women aged 16–57	27.1	29.0	32.9	34.2	33.1
Persons above working age	22.8	25.5	26.3	30.0	25.2
Men aged 63 and older	20.5	27.7	30.9	32.8	27.9
Women aged 58 years and older	23.7	24.6	24.4	28.9	24.2

Source: National Statistics Committee. Survey of household budgets.

Income

	2009		*2010*		*2011*	
	Disposable per capita income	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*	*Disposable per capita income*	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*	*Disposable per capita income*	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*
National	2 311.9		2 494.4		2 936.4	
Batken	2 142.7	92.7	2 404.6	96.4	3 073.5	104.7
Jalal-Abad	2 115.7	91.5	2 314.8	92.8	2 672.5	91.0
Ysyk-Köl	1 761.1	76.2	2 565.9	102.9	2 896.2	98.6
Naryn	1 747.6	75.6	1 988.0	79.7	2 506.3	85.4
Osh	2 371.2	102.6	2 295.6	92.0	2 848.5	97.0
Talas	1 762.9	76.3	2 099.2	84.2	2 487.0	84.7
Chüy	2 582.7	111.7	2 786.9	111.7	3 106.0	105.8
City of Bishkek	2 889.4	125.0	3 024.5	121.3	3 437.5	117.1
City of Osh	...	...	...	...	...	...

Income

	2012		*2013*		*2014*	
	Disposable per capita income	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*	*Disposable per capita income*	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*	*Disposable per capita income*	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*
National	3 215.8		3 336.3		3869.7	
Batken	3 130.8	97.4	3 200.0	95.9	3 543.9	91.6

	2012		2013		2014	
	Disposable per capita income	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*	*Disposable per capita income*	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*	*Disposable per capita income*	*Ratio of regional to national per capita income*
Jalal-Abad	2 543.4	79.1	2 795.2	83.8	3 213.8	83.0
Ysyk-Köl	3 130.0	97.3	2 850.2	85.4	4 097.4	105.9
Naryn	2 994.4	93.1	3 073.6	92.1	3 220.1	83.2
Osh	3 218.9	100.1	3 032.8	90.9	3 555.4	91.9
Talas	2 992.5	93.1	3 617.3	108.4	4 094.3	105.8
Chüy	3 708.5	115.3	3 424.4	102.6	4 294.4	111.0
City of Bishkek	3 771.5	117.3	4 646.0	139.3	4 899.4	126.6
City of Osh	...	...	3 236.3	97.0	3 730.6	96.4

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 24 of the list of issues

85. The Government has approved minimum standards for social services provided to homeless persons in overnight shelters. Not-for-profit organizations working with homeless persons and the district social development administration of Bishkek have conducted a training workshop on the implementation of minimum standards for social services provided to homeless persons who use such facilities.

86. A 24-hour shelter for homeless persons was opened in Kyzyl-Kiya (Batken province) under the State social procurement programme for 2014.

87. There are 760 homeless persons in Bishkek, 49 in Chüy, none in Talas, 40 in Ysyk-Köl, 67 in Osh, 12 in Jalal-Abad, 18 in Batken and 1 in Naryn, a total of 947 nationwide. District and municipal social development administrations are conducting work on the reissuance of documents to, and the placement of homeless persons in temporary shelters and special permanent residential facilities. In 2014, 25 persons were placed in the residential facilities of the Ministry of Social Development.

88. Questions concerning forced eviction are matters for the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the local government authorities. Populations are resettled from areas hit by natural or man-made disasters (mudslides, landslides, water conservation zones, rockslides, inundation zones of water basins, hydroelectric power plants, roadways, main gas pipelines etc.), in conformity with land legislation and article 12 of the Constitution.

89. In towns, persons are resettled on the basis of approved urban planning documentation following the confiscation of land for State or municipal needs in accordance with existing legislation.

90. Work is being carried out on a plan for urgent phased action to dismantle corruption schemes and implement measures to eliminate the risk of corruption in connection with the State regulation and administration of urban planning and architectural activity and the construction of buildings for various uses. One aspect of the plan, which was approved by the Kyrgyzstan Defence Council, provides for the prohibition on the certification and commissioning of structures built without a permit and without a technical inspection or testing. This measure ensures that illegal construction is not approved.

91. All disputes relating to illegal structures, forced resettlement and the expropriation of property which come before a court are examined in accordance with international and national law and in conformity with the rules contained in international human rights instruments.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 25 of the list of issues

92. A Government Order has established an interdepartmental working group within the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration which has elaborated a draft State programme for food security and nutrition (2015-2017) which includes separate components on food security and initiatives to improve the population's diet. One important goal of the programme is to bring national food security and nutrition policy into line with the food security approach widely used in international practice, which has four pillars: food availability; food access; use; and stability.

93. Improved access to food, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged persons and groups, plays a central role in the programme, the aim being to reduce the rate of illnesses caused by a deficiency in microelements and vitamins.

94. The following measures are being taken to combat malnutrition, in particular micronutrient deficiency:

- Amendments have been introduced to an Act on the enrichment of first and highest grade flour, making enrichment mandatory;
- Iron supplements have been enriched with folic acid and distributed to pregnant women free of charge to combat anaemia and folate deficiency;
- Home-cooked food for children between 6 and 24 months of age is enriched with the vitamin-mineral food supplement Gulazyk to combat deficiencies in vitamin A, folic acid and iron;
- Iodized salt is used to prevent iodine illnesses (97 per cent of families use iodized salt);
- Legislation has been adopted to promote breastfeeding and regulate the marketing of artificial foods, thereby ensuring a nutritional and safe diet for mothers and children;
- Some 10 million dollars (470 million soms) are allocated annually to feed elementary school children. The United Nations World Food Programme is currently working to improve the quality of school food (arrangements to serve hot meals in 134 out of 2,200 schools).

Article 12
The right to physical and mental health

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 26 of the list of issues

95. The State Programme of medical and health care guarantees defines the range and types of medical and health care available and conditions for eligibility and ensures entitlement to medical and health care in health-care facilities, irrespective of the form of ownership of the bodies participating in the Programme, in accordance with national legislation.

96. The extent of medical and health care provided under the Programme is determined within the limits of health-care funding from the national budget, local budgets (Bishkek) and funding from compulsory health-insurance resources.

97. In 2014, 10,009.5 million soms were allocated for the Programme (as compared to 9,770.5 million soms in 2013), including 71,996.0 million soms from budget resources and 1,842.4 million soms from compulsory health-insurance resources.

98. The Programme introduces a list of categories of citizens entitled to free medical and health care and to favourable conditions based on their social status (28 categories) and on clinical evidence of an underlying disease (17 categories).

99. In accordance with Government Decision No. 650 on the package of measures for ensuring the rights and improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities (2014–2017), a large number of initiatives are being carried out at health-care facilities, including:

- *Ramps and railings*: In accordance with approved design norms specified in building codes and in regulations SNiP KR 20-02:2009, health-care facilities built between 2010 and 2013 must be equipped with ramps, railings, lifts and banisters. Throughout the country, health-care facilities for persons with special needs have been equipped with barrier-free access. The work schedule for the installation of ramps in health-care facilities has been completed to 91.5 per cent;
- *Prevention of early occupational disability*: The following work is being conducted in the framework of Government Decision No. 755 on the Social Protection Development Strategy 2012–2014: technology for quality antenatal care has been introduced at all primary health-care centres to give pregnant women up to the thirteenth week 400 µg. of folic acid and 200 mg. of iodine, to conduct gravidograms and bacteriological urine cultures, to screen for proteinuria and congenital malformations of the foetus by means of ultrasound (between the twelfth and eighteenth week) and to test for HIV, the Rh factor and RW;
- *Medical rehabilitation*: The national centre for maternal and child welfare has provided in-house care for 733 children with special needs. The research institute of balneotherapy and physiotherapy has provided in-house care to 203 such children. Specialists at this facility are elaborating educational recommendations for a phased medical rehabilitation of children with cerebral palsy.

100. "Den Sooluk", the National Programme to reform the national health-care system, elaborated for the period 2012–2016, is a continuation of the transformations under the restructuring of preceding years and also takes into account the current sociopolitical situation in the country and focuses on people, results, the removal of barriers and the principle of democratic implementation. The main goal of the Programme is to promote public health by improving the health-care system and by providing universal coverage and quality preventive and medical treatment services.

101. Government Decision No. 352 was adopted on a coordinating council for public health care which reports to the Government. The Ministry of Health has begun to work actively to create a committee to enhance coordination and to take effective measures to address health-care problems, protect and improve public health and promote an intersectoral approach.

102. Four priority areas have been identified — cardiovascular illnesses, maternal and child welfare, tuberculosis and HIV — and many effective measures have been carried out.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 27 of the list of issues

103. In 2014, 450,689 persons took an immunoassay test, and 645 were found to be HIV-positive, including 612 Kyrgyz citizens. Of those 612 persons, 82 were pregnant women, and 175 were intravenous drug users. Twenty-one NGOs are working on a rapid gingival fluid-based test for vulnerable groups; 6,901 persons have been tested, of whom 291 (4.2 per cent) initially tested positive. A total of 494 newborns (82 per cent) and 499 mothers (81 per cent) received antiretroviral prophylaxis. Thanks to the introduction of new approaches drawing on multidisciplinary teams at the initial stage, as of 31 December 2014 811 people living with AIDS resumed antiretroviral therapy, 1,708 persons (1,332 adults

and 376 children) were receiving antiretroviral therapy, and access of people living with AIDS to laboratory monitoring of the effectiveness of treatment was improved: 1,858 CD4 tests (increase by 1.3 times) and 4,032 viral load tests (increase by 2.1 times) were conducted. Sixty-eight health-care specialists in epidemiological monitoring of the HIV-infection and 1,004 health-care workers improved their qualifications at the Kyrgyz State medical institute of advanced training under a HIV-prevention programme.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 28 of the list of issues

104. Based on preliminary data, in 2014 the demographic situation was characterized by a growth in the birth rate, which stood at 27.4 per thousand persons, compared to 27.2 per thousand in 2013. The rate of natural increase of the population therefore stood at 21.3 per thousand persons.

105. According to current data, in 2014 the national infant mortality rate was the same as in 2013: 20.7 per thousand live births.

106. In the past decade, the maternal mortality rate has virtually never fallen below 50 per 100,000 live births. According to preliminary data, in 2014 the maternal mortality rate rose in comparison to the same period in 2013 by 28.7 per cent to 51.7 per 100,000 live births, as compared to 40.1 in 2013.

107. Complications leading to maternal mortality are due to a number of economic, social and cultural factors, the state of public health care, the demographic structure, behavioural habits etc. It is well known that maternal and child mortality is considered to be one of the most sensitive indicators determining the poverty of a country and its level of socioeconomic and human development.

108. With the introduction of a pocket guide on in-patient care for children, hospitals have significantly reduced the number of cases of unwarranted hospitalizations, the administration of lytic cocktails to children with high fever, and polypharmacy. A mother- and child-friendly attitude has been noted: access of mothers to children in intensive care units has been improved (the mother can stay with the child). Reception wards for children have been established with the creation of conditions for providing first aid to children (in pilot hospitals).

109. Parallel funding from donors, including the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United States Agency for International Development, the Asian Development Bank and the German Bank for Reconstruction and Development, support a number of programmes for maternal and infant health care based on World Health Organization strategies. For that reason, the further institutionalization of these programmes poses a difficult problem. An agreement has been reached with the German Bank for Reconstruction and Development on the building of a modern perinatal centre at the National Centre for Maternal Welfare for 9.5 million euros.

110. The Ministry of Health is taking measures to reduce anaemia in women and children. A programme introduced in June 2009 with donor support and entitled "Gulazyk" ("Sprinkles", a vitamin and mineral powder) has been working to prevent micronutrient deficiency in children up to two years of age and pregnant women.

111. Immunization is a priority programme which has proved its effectiveness and has had a positive impact on the country's health indicators. However, the annual procurement of vaccines from the national budget is underfunded by 40 to 60 per cent, and Kyrgyzstan continues to depend on foreign funding.

112. A programme for effective perinatal care is being carried out in the framework of the programme to improve perinatal assistance. It is based on the principles of

regionalization, exclusive breastfeeding, a warm environment for newborns in maternity wards, vaccination of newborns and emergency obstetric care.

113. Teams of specialists (anaesthesiologists, obstetricians, neonatologists) have travelled to Batken and Naryn provinces to provide practical assistance in areas in which an increase in maternal mortality has been observed.

114. To improve access to primary health care, with or without a residence permit, in particular for vulnerable population groups (internal migrants, pregnant women with children under the age of five, persons in shelters and residential care facilities, children in orphanages, intravenous drug users, commercial sex workers etc.), an order on rules for the assignment of patients to clinics, jointly adopted by the Ministry of Health and the national compulsory medical care fund, has been approved and is being implemented.

115. The Ministry of Health conducts quarterly meetings of a commission for the reduction of maternal mortality, and disciplinary boards take action against senior officials of medical facilities at which deficiencies in emergency obstetric care have been observed.

116. With regard to reproductive health, the resident population at the beginning of 2015 stood at 5,895,100 persons, of whom 26.7 per cent were women of reproductive age, 2.7 per cent were adolescent girls aged 15–17 and 26.7 per cent were men of reproductive age; 33.6 per cent of the population live in urban areas and 66.4 per cent in rural areas. The birth rate has risen steadily in recent years, from 25.2 in 2009 to 27.4 in 2014, an increase of 8.7 per cent.

117. There were 151,826 births in 2013, as compared to 147,522 in 2012, an increase of 4,304. Births among girls under age 20 accounted for 7.5 per cent of the overall birth structure, compared to 7.7 per cent in 2012; girls under age 18 accounted for 0.9 per cent of the total, compared to 0.9 per cent in 2012.

118. Work has also been carried out in this area. To date, the NGO "Alliance for Reproductive Health" has opened 12 offices with the support of the United Nations Population Fund. The Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan provides comprehensive medical and psychological assistance to adolescents and young adults on questions of reproductive health, based on the principles of accessibility and goodwill. Services include consultations on questions of pregnancy and family planning, prenatal and postnatal care, personal choice and distribution of contraceptives, pre-abortion and post-abortion consultations, termination of pregnancy, medical rehabilitation, and social and legal support and protection.

119. In 2008 the programme entitled "The Path to Safety" was launched. It includes questions concerning the prevention of the HIV infection, drug addiction and the prevention of unwanted pregnancy. The programme, which was approved by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, is designed for ninth to eleventh grade pupils. Some 710 schools throughout the country have the programme, and training seminars are conducted for the staff of health promotion offices and family medicine centres, school nurses, teachers, social workers and counsellors, who hold extracurricular classes for pupils in grades 9 to 11.

Articles 13 and 14
The right to education

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 29 of the list of issues

120. Pursuant to the Civil Registration Act, births, marriages, divorces, adoptions, declarations of paternity, changes of name and deaths must be registered in the manner prescribed under this legislation.

121. Registration takes place at civil registry offices.

122. For registration, the applicant must present supporting documents, including an identity document.

123. Difficulties arise when the parents have an irresponsible attitude towards identity documents, i.e. they do not receive them on time, lose them, do not recover them or are not citizens of Kyrgyzstan and thus may not receive a birth certificate for their children. However, the State does not restrict their right to obtain documents.

124. In 2014, the local offices of the Ministry brought to light 5,193 cases of children who did not have a birth certificate, of whom 2,843 received help for their issuance.

125. To address problems associated with the registration of births and the issuance of birth certificates, the Ministry of Social Development has elaborated a draft programme for the promotion of the social protection of the population 2015–2017, the action plan for which includes an initiative on drafting and adopting regulations providing for mechanisms governing the timely registration of births, irrespective of the parents' documents or place of residence.

126. According to information from the local offices of the Ministry, in 2014 316 children were found not to be attending school for various reasons, of whom 266 were returned to school.

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 30 of the list of issues

127. The Education Act specifies that the right of citizens to education is ensured by the State, as represented by the Government, through the creation of an educational system that meets the interests of the individual, society and the State. Pursuant to the Act, an educational system is being built that is based on the successive and uninterrupted nature of educational stages, accessibility of general education and high-quality achievement at all levels through a transition to a competency-based approach and also provides for sufficiently varied and individualized schooling.

128. Key to ensuring quality education is a reform of content. The Ministry of Education and Science, as the body responsible for elaborating and implementing educational policy, therefore gives close attention to work on improving legal norms in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

129. Of crucial importance at pre-school level is the normative improvement of the functioning of various types of educational establishments and results-based requirements through the adoption of:

- The Pre-School Education Act (2009);
- An updated version of the State educational standard "Pre-school Education and Child Welfare" (2012);

- "Standards for the Education and Development of Children aged 3-7", a system of minimum norms and requirements for educational content and child development levels (2013).

130. The educational reform has been enhanced through the elaboration and adoption of a State educational standard for general secondary education (Government Decision No. 403 of 21 July 2014), which has promoted the transition to competency-based learning.

131. At the level of vocational education, the most important legal developments are:

- The transition to two-level (bachelor, master) training (2012);
- Normative consolidation of accreditation as an instrument for evaluating educational quality;
- Award of a scholarship solely in the presence of an agreement with an employer on future recruitment;
- Admission to all forms of education solely on the basis of national test results;
- Adoption of a policy for an optimization of the network of higher educational establishments and an action plan for its implementation (Government Decision No. 277 of 23 May 2014).

132. The most important initiatives for improving the quality of the educational system are as follows:

At pre-school level

- Since 2006, pre-school preparation of children who have not attended nursery schools. In the past two years, a 240-hour preparation covered virtually all children between five and a half and seven years of age. This ensures an equal start in life for all children, irrespective of the social status of their family, and lays the foundation for successful schooling and future socialization.

At school level

- One hundred innovative schools have begun operating as clusters for the elaboration of new educational content, a system for in-house teacher training and other goals;
- Improvement in the teaching of the State and other languages; preservation and support of the languages of minorities through the introduction in 2015 in 17 schools of a pilot project on multilingual education, with assistance from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, UNICEF and the OSCE;
- Elaboration and start of the introduction of the "Kyrgyztest" system to determine the level of competency in the Kyrgyz State language; this may serve as a stimulus for improving the quality of language teaching and learning;
- Retention of teachers locally (in 2013 and 2014 73 per cent of young teachers reported to their assigned posts, as compared to only 38 per cent in 2008).

At the vocational education level

- An increase in the number of vocational colleges (132) and their attractiveness (93,000 students), because they have begun to offer specialities that are more in demand, and the training received meets the needs of the labour market;
- Elaboration of new-generation standards, to be introduced starting in 2015.

133. In Kyrgyzstan, 92 per cent of higher educational institutions have shifted to a two-level (bachelor-master) system, which means that students take greater responsibility for the quality of their education.

134. In 2012, 13 State higher educational institutions concluded agreements for the recruitment of graduates by employers. In 2014, that figure rose to 23 State and 6 non-State schools (56 per cent of higher educational institutions). A three-way agreement (between the student, the school and the head of the body which sent the secondary school graduate) is concluded with students who enrol under a targeted programme. In 2014, 73.9 per cent of graduates of higher educational institutions found employment. The percentage of graduates who found employment ranges from 26 per cent to 100 per cent, depending on the school.

Number of schools with classrooms equipped with computers and Internet access
(at the start of the 2013/14 school year)

Number of schools with classrooms equipped with basic computer and information technology	*Number of computer work stations*	*Number of personal computers used for educational purposes*	*Number of such computers with Internet access*
1 925	21 048	15 474	31

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 31 of the list of issues

135. In 2008, the Policy Framework and Special Programme for the development of multicultural and multilingual education 2008–2020 was adopted. The importance of multicultural education was highlighted in the Educational Development Strategy 2012–2020. Higher educational institutions have departments for the study of the culture, languages and history of Kyrgyzstan's ethnic groups. More than 73 per cent of the documents in the country's libraries are in the languages of ethnic minorities.

136. Schools in areas with large populations of ethnic minorities are required by law to teach classes in the relevant ethnic language. Of the 2,207 general education establishments that currently cater for 1,027,123 children, 77.7 per cent hold classes in one language and 22.3 per cent have two or more languages of instruction.

Distribution of general education establishments (day schools) and number of pupils enrolled, by language of instruction
(at the start of the school year 2013/14)

	2009/10	*2010/11*	*2011/12*	*2012/13*	*2013/14*
General education establishments with instruction in one language	1 742	1 735	1 721	1 718	1 714
language:					
Kyrgyz	1 406	1 410	1 424	1 437	1 443
Russian	200	201	203	202	203
Uzbek	133	121	91	76	65
Tajik	3	3	3	3	3

	2009/10	*2010/11*	*2011/12*	*2012/13*	*2013/14*
Number of pupils in establishments with instruction in one language	681 190	664 955	649 166	639 517	641 472
language:					
Kyrgyz	491 529	485 867	480 878	476 660	479 776
Russian	120 648	119 201	125 519	126 953	133 784
Uzbek	67 060	57 960	40 833	33 940	25 951
Tajik	1 953	1 927	1 936	1 964	1 961

Article 15
Cultural rights

Reply to questions raised in paragraph 32 of the list of issues

137. Pursuant to the Policy Framework on strengthening national unity and improving inter-ethnic relations, a training course was conducted on ethnocultural diversity in Kyrgyzstan for officials of the State agency for local government issues and inter-ethnic relations. In November 2014 the State agency held Ethnic Communities of Kyrgyzstan Days in Naryn and Talas with the participation of the ethnocultural centres of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan in order to familiarize the public throughout the country with the culture and traditions of Kyrgyzstan's ethnic minorities.

138. On 27 May 2014, an initiative entitled "Fergana – Valley of Friendship" was conducted in the city of Kadamjai (Kadamjai district, Batken province) with the participation of representatives of Fergana province, Uzbekistan, and Soldii province, Tajikistan. The initiative was an opportunity to promote good-neighbourly friendly relations between the peoples of the Fergana valley and to bring together the ethnic groups living in this region.

139. The programme for the development of local government in Kyrgyzstan 2013–2017 approved by Government Decision No. 678 of 18 December 2013 provides for a set of measures to promote regional development by strengthening the potential of local-government bodies.

140. Measures are being taken to encourage the participation of ethnic minorities in the political and public life of the country. A good example in that regard is the data on the ethnic composition of the deputies of the local councils, which as of February 2015 was as follows: Russian – 203, Uzbek – 587, Tajik – 48, Kazak – 47 and other ethnic minorities – 317.

141. In 2014, 20 community liaison offices for inter-ethnic relations set up by the State agency for local government issues and inter-ethnic relations were operating in Osh, Jalal-Abad, Batken and Chüy provinces and in the city of Karakol (Ysyk-Köl province). Twenty inter-ethnic public consultation councils have been established in these regions; their members include representatives of ethnic minorities. These councils, set up within district and municipal administrations, work on-site to prevent inter-ethnic conflicts.